

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SANTIA 00413 142118Z
ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
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S E C R E T SANTIAGO 413

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, PE, PN, EC, CI, BL
SUBJECT: COPING WITH THE ANDEAN CONTROVERSY

REFS: STATE 310852 AND REPLIES THERETO; SANTIAGO 12205

1. THE RECENT FLURRY OF ACTIVITY WITH RESPECT TO PERU-CHILE-
ECUADOR TENSIONS HAS STIMULATED MANY THOUGHTFUL SUGGESTIONS. WHILE
I HESITATE TO WEIGH IN AGAIN, I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE A FEW
OBSERVATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN WASHINGTON'S FURTHER CONSIDERATION
OF THE PROBLEM.

2. FOLLOWING ON JOHN CRIMMINS' PROPOSAL, AND THE REACTIONS
THERETO, I SENSE THAT ATTENTION WILL BE FOCUSED ON THE NATURE
AND FUNCTIONS OF A CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF THIRD PARTIES,
INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES. AT THIS STAGE, IT SEEMS TO
ME AN EXCELLENT IDEA TO THINK IN THESE TERMS. EVEN IF IT
WERE NO MORE THAN A SIMPLE DEVICE FOR EXCHANGING INFORMATION,
SUCH A GROUP WOULD HAVE A CERTAIN DETERRENT VALUE. TO BE EFFECTIVE,

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IT WOULD HAVE TO BE REASONABLY BALANCED. FROM THE CHILEAN STAND-
POINT, THEREFORE, VENEZUELAN PREDOMINANCE WOULD BE UNWELCOME,
AND U.S. AND BRAZILIAN PARTICIPATION HELPFUL. WHETHER THE EXERCISE
COULD EVER GET AS FAR DOWN THE ROAD AS JOHN CRIMMINS SUGGESTS,
WITH SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES AND AN AGENDA COVERING THE BROAD
RANGE OF POLITICAL AND ARMS CONTROL PROBLEMS INVOLVED HERE,
IS NOT CLEAR. BUT ANY OTHER COLLECTIVE MECHANISM WOULD BE SUBJECT

TO SIMILAR LIMITATIONS.

3. RECOGNIZING ALL THE DISABILITIES OF THE OAS, WE SHOULD CONSIDER CAREFULLY THE VALUE OF BEGINNING TO ENGAGE IT IN SOME NON-OPERATION WAY IN THIS SITUATION, AT A REASONABLY EARLY STAGE. TAKING A WORST-CASE APPROACH, AND ASSUMING THAT THE SOVIET AND/OR CUBAN HAND IN PERU WILL BECOME MORE EVIDENT, HAVING THE OAS IN THE PICTURE WOULD SERVE, UNDER BOTH THE UN AND THE OAS CHARTERS, TO KEEP THE UN OUT. THE PROBLEMS WE MIGHT FACE IN DEALING WITH THE ANDEAN CONTROVERSY IN A HEMISPHERE CONTEXT WOULD BE VASTLY COMPOUNDED BY HAVING TO DISCUSS IT IN A UN POLITICAL FORUM.

4. WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT THE MOTIVATING FORCE BEHIND THIS CONTROVERSY IS THE ARMS SUPERIORITY, COUPLED WITH THE IRREDENTISM, OF PERU. ABSENT THESE FACTORS, THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEM. NOW THAT THE IMMEDIATE SCARE TALK HAS DIED DOWN, I THINK THAT AN EARLY ELEMENT IN OUR LONGER-TERM SCENARIO SHOULD BE A CAREFUL AND SOBERING DISCUSSION WITH THE PERUVIANS AT A HIGH LEVEL, POINTING OUT THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE COURSE ON WHICH THE PERUVIANS SEEM TO BE LAUNCHED. FOR PROTECTIVE COLORATION, SIMILAR DISCUSSIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE WITH THE CHILEANS AND THE ECUADORIANS. WE SHOULD CUT THROUGH GENERALITIES LIKE THE THESIS THAT ALL THAT IS GOING ON IS A MODERNIZATION OF ARMED FORCES, AND NOT OVERESTIMATE THE COSMETIC EFFECTS OF SUCH STEPS AS PUBLICIZED TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTS AND MEETINGS OF CULTURAL COMMISSIONS. THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF AN APPROACH, IT SEEMS TO ME, MUST CENTER ON THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING ANY FRONTIER, AND ON THE POINT THAT AS SOVIET BLOC INVOLVEMENT INCREASES, SO WILL OUR OWN
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CONCERN.

5. AS TO THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE OF THE BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR, IT IS OUR FEELING HERE THAT NONE OF THE THREE PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED WANTS TO PUSH THE MATTER TO A CONFRONTATION. ALL PARTIES PROFESS TO BE WILLING TO DISCUSS THEIR LATEST PROPOSALS, BUT NONE SEEMS TO BE IN ANY PARTICULAR HURRY TO DO SO. WHILE THE PROSPECTS FOR A SOLUTION NOW SEEM MINIMAL, THE CHILEANS WILL NOT, AND THE BOLIVIANS CANNOT, TAKE ANY STEPS TO PREEMPT THE SITUATION. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, ANY OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN NEGOTIATIONS ON A CORRIDOR WOULD SEEM TO BE PREMATURE.
POPPER

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